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REMARKS

Applicant notes the Examiner's indication of allowability of claims 20-22, subject to the claims being rewritten in independent form. The Examiner is kindly thanked for this indication of allowance.

The Examiner rejected claims 11-15 under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Eto (Japan Patent No. 01-274,440).

Applicant notes that in the latest Office Action that the Examiner equates the lead frame base tape of claim 11 with the heater plate 7a of Eto. Applicant respectfully points out that this is now the third different element in Eto the Examiner has equated with the lead frame base tape in 3 different Office Actions. In the First Office Action, the Examiner equated the lead frame base tape with the lead frame 5 of Eto and in the Second Office Action the Examiner equated the lead frame base tape with the metal plate part 10 of Eto. Once again, Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Specifically, heater plate 7a of Eto is comprised of a porous part 8 and a metal plate part 10. The heater plate 7a is then brought into contact with a lead frame 5 on one side, and a heater block 9a on the other side. A vacuum is applied to the lead frame 5 through the porous part 8 of the heater plate 7a by the heater block 9a. As stated in Eto: "the lead frame 5 is sucked with a vacuum sucking port 11 which is provided at a heater block 9a having a heater 12 through the countless air holes in the porous part 8."

The Office Action states that "Eto teaches placing a first surface of the lead frame base tape 7a onto a leadframe 5 and the second surface of the base tape onto a porous block (9a). As such, Applicant understand that the Examiner has equated the lead frame base tape with the heater plate 7a of Eto, the lead frame with the lead frame 5 of Eto, and the porous block with the heater block 9a of Eto. If such a correlation is chosen, however, Eto fails to teach the method steps of claim 11. Specifically, Eto fails to teach or suggest "applying a vacuum on a second surface of the lead frame base tape, which causes a vacuum to be applied to the second surface of the lead frame base tape." The vacuum in Eto is applied to the lead frame 5, not to the heater plate 7a. Indeed, the holes in the porous part 8 of heater plate 7a are such that the vacuum travels through the heater plate 7a to the lead frame.

Furthermore, Applicant respectfully takes issue with the Office Action's argument that the heater plate 7a in Eto corresponds to a lead frame base tape. The Office Action quotes a dictionary definition of tape as evidence of this correspondence, but fails to address the entire term. Specifically, the Office Action ignores the "lead frame base" portion of the term "lead frame base tape", and assumes that any "narrow limp or flexible strip or band" can be "lead frame base tape." Indeed, the fact that the heater plate 7a only comes in contact with leadframe 5 via a vacuum implies that the heater plate 7a is not tape, at least with respect to the lead frame, and thus is not a lead frame base tape. Additionally, Applicant notes that the Examiner's own definition of tape does not appear to be fulfilled by Eto. Specifically, the heater plate 7a in Eto does not appear to be either limp or flexible. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 11 is in condition for allowance.

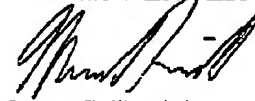
The Examiner rejected claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eto, (Japan Patent No. 01-274,440).

Dependent claims 12-17 are also patentably distinct from the cited references for at least the same reasons as those recited above for the independent claim, upon which they ultimately depend. These dependent claims recite additional limitations that further distinguish these dependent claims from the cited references. For at least these reasons, claims 12-17 are not anticipated or made obvious by Eto and/or the official notice outlined in the Office Action.

Applicant also notes that the Examiner has failed to provide ANY basis for the rejection of claim 18. As such, it is unclear if this claim is in condition for allowance.

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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